



DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
Autism Speaks 400
Dover International Speedway
May 31, 2009

Gordon Loses Point Lead Following Tough Weekend at Dover

It was a tough weekend for Jeff Gordon and the No. 24 team in DuPont's backyard -- a race weekend that included a hard wreck during qualifying on Friday and getting trapped a lap down during a green-flag pit stop early in Sunday's Autism Speaks 400 at Dover International Speedway. Gordon finished 26th in the 400-mile event and fell to second in the standings, 46 points behind new leader Tony Stewart. Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jimmie Johnson won the event.

After slamming the wall and destroying his primary car during qualifying on Friday, Gordon started 42nd in a backup car on Sunday. He had moved inside the top 30 when a caution flag waved at lap 30.

"The car's 'edgy' on exit," Gordon radioed the crew. "I'm tight all the way through the corner, but loose on exit."

During the caution period, Gordon stopped for fuel, four tires, and chassis adjustments before restarting 25th on lap 35. When a caution waved eight laps later, he stayed out on the track and gained 11 more positions when many drivers ahead of the four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion stopped for fuel and tires again.

Once the race restarted, Gordon again battled a tight condition as the race approached the 100-lap mark -- and another pit stop. Green-flag pit stops began on lap 106 with Gordon making his stop at lap 114. But as he slid to a stop in his pit box, the race leader passed him on the track as a caution flag waved.

Now a lap down, Gordon restarted 28th on lap 123 with a brand new set of tires and chassis adjustments. But the changes caused the exit of the corner to be "three times looser than it was before," and he battled hard to stay only one lap down (the first car scored one lap down when a caution waves is given a free pass onto the lead lap by NASCAR). Unfortunately, Johnson bypassed Gordon on lap 216, placing him two laps down.

Another caution waved at lap 231, and crew chief Steve Letarte called for more major chassis adjustments. The changes improved the handling dramatically -- Gordon passed the second-place car on lap 310 -- but he was never able to pass the leader to gain back one of those lost laps (and, subsequently, battle for the "free pass" onto the lead lap). Through attrition, Gordon was able to gain several spots before the checkered flag waved to finish 26th.

"We lost a lap because we were caught on pit road when the caution waved," Gordon said after the race. "We lost another lap on the track when one adjustment really hurt us -- and one adjustment can ruin your race."

"Once we got that (adjustment) out of the car, we were good again. At the end of the race, we were a second or third-place car. We just didn't have the track position to show it."

Next Sunday, the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series visits Pocono Raceway for the Pocono 500. TNT begins their live coverage at 12:30 p.m. EDT while MRN Radio's live coverage begins at 1:15 p.m. EDT.

Autism Speaks 400 results (unofficial)

1. Jimmie Johnson
2. Tony Stewart
3. Greg Biffle
4. Matt Kenseth
5. Kurt Busch
6. Kasey Kahne
7. Carl Edwards
8. Ryan Newman
9. Casey Mears
10. Mark Martin
- 26. Jeff Gordon**

Point standings (unofficial)

1. Tony Stewart
- 2. Jeff Gordon**
3. Jimmie Johnson
4. Kurt Busch
5. Ryan Newman
6. Kyle Busch
7. Denny Hamlin
8. Matt Kenseth
9. Greg Biffle
10. Jeff Burton